

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ABU DH 03119 061050Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----106044 061053Z /23

P R 060850Z NOV 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO SECSTATE PRIORITY 6873  
INFO AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 3119

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PBOR, TC, MU  
SUBJECT: OMANI DEMAND FOR RETURN OF TERRITORY SITUATED IN  
RAS AL KHAIMAH

1. IN RECENT DAYS, THE UAE HAS RECEIVED ANOTHER UNEXPECTED  
PIECE OF BAD NEWS WITH THE DEMAND BY SULTAN QABUS OF OMAN  
THAT UAE RETURN TO OMAN ALL OF THE LAND ADJOINING THE MUSANDAM  
PENINSULA INCLUDING KHOR AL KHAWIR AND AS FAR DOWN THE COAST  
AS RAMS. FROM INFORMATION WE HAVE PIECED TOGETHER,  
THIS DEMAND WAS DELIVERED TO SHAIKH ZAYID BY OMAN'S  
MINISTER OF INTERIOR SAID MUHAMMAD AHMAD, WHEN HE  
CAME TO VISIT THE UAE ON OCTOBER 26. ZAYID EX-  
PECTED THE OMANI MINISTER HAD COME TO EXPRESS  
HIS CONDOLENCES OVER THE DEATH OF MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS SAIF GHUBBASH AND WAS ASTONISHED TO RECEIVE  
THIS DEMAND.

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SECRET

PAGE 02 ABU DH 03119 061050Z

2. A SPECIAL MEETING WAS HELD AT THE MILITARY AIRPORT  
IN ABU DHABI ON NOVEMBER 1 CHAIRED BY VICE PRESIDENT  
SHAIKH RASHID JUST AFTER SHAIKH ZAYID HAD LEFT FOR HIS  
STATE VISIT TO IRAN. WE HAD NOTICED THAT ALL OF THE RULERS,  
INCLUDING SHAIKH SAQR OF RAS AL KHAIMAH, AND REMAINING  
MINISTERS HAD BEEN ASKED TO STAY BEHIND AND HAD CONGRE-

GATED IN WAITING ROOM. WE HAD ASSUMED THAT IT HAD TO DO WITH A REVIEW OF INTERNAL SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE UAE ARISING OVER GHUBBASH DEATH AND THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION AGAINST SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM. HOWEVER, THE MEETING WAS DECIDE HOW TO RESPOND TO THE OMANI DEMAND, WHICH APPARENTLY IS IN VERY STRONG TERMS. IT WAS DECIDED TO SEND THE CROWN PRINCE OF AJMAN, SHAIKH HUMAID ALONG WITH AMBASSADOR RASHID ABDALLAH FOR MFA, TO MUSCAT TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH QABUS. AT SAME TIME, SOME NORTHERN COMMAND TROOPS WERE DEPLOYED ALONG UAE BORDER WITH MUSANDAM ON EXCUSE THAT THEY NEEDED PREVENT SMUGGLING.

3. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION GIVEN ME CONFIDENTIALLY BY BRITISH AMBASSADOR, SHAIKH HAMAID WAS TREATED STIFFLY BY SULTAN QABUS WHO ONLY SPENT TEN MINUTES WITH HIM. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON WHAT WAS SAID BUT IT APPEARS NOT HAVE BEEN A SATISFACTORY MEETING. UAE LEADERSHIP HAS BECOME CONCERNED WITHOUT QUITE KNOWING YET HOW TO PROCEED. A FIVE MAN COMMITTEE HEADED BY FONMIN SUWAIDI HAS BEEN FORMED (IN WHICH THERE ARE NO NATIVES FROM RAS AL KHAIMAH). THE AREA CLAIMED BY OMAN INCLUDES THE RAS AL KHAIMAH QUARRY QUARRY AND THE LARGE CEMENT PLANTS AT RAMS, WHICH REPRESENT THAT EMIRAT'S PRINCIPAL INDIGENOUS ECOMOMIC ACTIVITY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ABU DH 03119 061050Z

4. ALTHOUGH UAE LEADERSHIP PROFESS NOT TO KNOW WHO TICKED OFF QABUS OR WHO IN OMAN IS BEHIND ALL OF THIS, WE BELIEVE PRINCIPAL REASON IS RAS AL KHAIMAH'S OFFSHORE DRILLING ACTIVITY. TWO OFFSHORE WELLS WERE DRILLED LAST YEAR BY VITOL WITH ONE WELL REPORTEDLY CAPABLE OF PRODUCING 4,000 BPD, AND OTHER 2,500 PBD. TWO MORE WELLS ARE NOW BEING DRILLED (FINANCED LARGELY BY RAS AL KHAIMAH) TO APPRAISE WHETHER THERE IS COMMERICAL FIELD. ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO, THE EASTERNMOST RIG WAS APPROACHED BY AN OMANI VESSEL AND TOLD TO MOVE.

4. AMBASSADOR ROBERTS HAS EXPRESSED TO ME HIS CONCERN THAT UAEG WILL SUSPECT THAT IT IS HMG WHICH HAS PUT QABUS UP TO THIS, WHICH IS NOT AT ALL THE CASE. WHILE OMAN CONTROLLED MUCH OF RAS AL KHAIMAH IN THE 18TH CENTURY, IT LOST CONTROL OF THE REGION LONG AGO. THE BOUNDARIES DRAWN UP BY THE BRITISH, INCLUDING THE FAMOUS JAUIAN WALKER MAP OF THE EARLY 1950'S, HAVE ALWAYS IDENTIFIED THIS REGION AS PART OF RAS AL KHAIMAH. SO FAR, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN APPROACHED BY EITHER THE UAE OR THE OMAN GOVERNMENT ON THIS MATTER.

5. FOR MUSCAT: WOULD WELCOME ANY BACKGROUND YOU CAN PROVIDE. QABUS' CLAIM MAY BE A DEVICE TO FORCE RAS AL KHAIMAH TO MOVE ITS RIG TO THE WEST. IT OCCURS TO US, HOWEVER, THAT IT MAY ALSO REFLECT QABUS' GROWING FEAR THAT THE INHABITANTS OF THE MUSANDAM, SEEING RAPID DEVELOPMENT ALL AROUND THEM BY SURROUNDING UAE TERRITORY, MAY SHOW SIGNS OF SWITCHING ALLEGIANCE.

DICKMAN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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